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PRODUCTION.

CARD FAN PRODUCTIONS

By Edward Marlo

A complete coverage of the subject of the production of continuous fans of cards from the air, with variations, suggestions, routine and general information.



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INTRODUCTION.

Knowing how most manuscripts appear, flourish for a while, then just as quickly disappear, I wanted to avoid the same fate falling to a book of mine. Therefore I decided to write of something on which the rarity of the subject matter alone may save it from the fate of others and make it more lasting. This something is the complete explanation of the continuous production of fans of cards at the finger tips.

To my knowledge, there has never been a book which explained thoroughly how to produce continuous fans of cards. One Eastman book probably came closer to this than any other.

I of course do not allude to the front and back palm with cards, nor do I mean the production of fans singly at the finger tips, for this has been done full justice in that twenty five cent copy of Thurston's Card Tricks. The only reference to fan production from the back palm that I find in my library is in the Tarbell Course, where Dr. Tarbell goes to great length to explain how one may be able to produce three cards in a fan, adding that as the student progresses he may add more cards. But here he stops and no further mention is made of fan productions.

One would think that Goodlette Dodson's book on EXHIBITION CARD FANS would contain this information. However, the book is just what the title implies: a treatise on fancy fan designs with cards. An excellent book on its own subject. Our next possible source, from whence it could have come, would be Mr. Hugard's CARD MANIPULATION series. Of the many sleights explained in these books, one would think that eventually there would be forthcoming an explanation of the fan productions, but we find Mr. Hugard giving us new and different methods but not the one used by professional magicians of today. Farelli's CARD MAGIC in two volumes, replete with photographs and clear and concise explanations of various flourishes, arm spreads, waterfall shuffles, and so on, still contain no explanation of what every amateur, who has witnessed a performance of card fan productions, would like to know.

Comes GREATER MAGIC. Surely John Northern Hilliard would not overlook this long overlooked subject. But ah, me! The best thing we could find on the subject in the vast array of card material is a method of producing cards singly at the fingertips, supposedly used by Cardini.

The above mentioned are about the only books, at the present time, in which one could possibly hope to find information on this branch of magic. When a person is seeking information that cannot be found in books, he must seek personal instruction. That is how I learned the production of fans. And that is how practically every amateur who does this type of juggling gained his knowledge. Always from someone

who learned it from someone else -- that someone else probably being a professional magician who charged a fair price to initiate the others in his mysteries.

Maybe there is a scheme afoot to keep this type of magic as exclusive as possible. This might be because of its commercial possibilities. Or perhaps it has just been overlooked.

In any case, it is about time someone did something about it, and I am electing myself to undertake the task of setting forth the methods whereby those who really want to become proficient in the art of producing continuous fans of cards may do so.

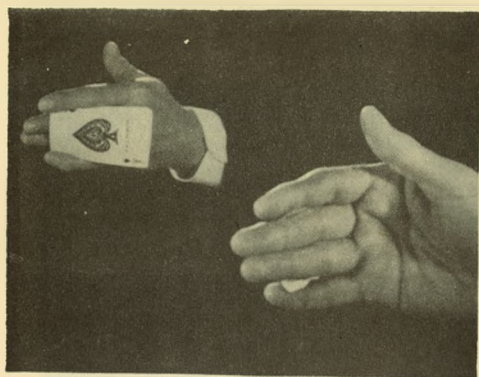
There is just one more point on this subject, and that is that some people might think that information on this matter may have appeared in some old book on magic. If so, the book must be long out of print, for I have not been able to locate such a book in many years of collecting magical literature. Nor is it within the memory of those we have discussed it with. It is questionable whether the subject was ever so covered, because interest in books on manipulation is quite modern.

Therefore I feel justified in putting down my findings in a work which will be available to the present day magicians. And since you know now that you haven't covered this subject in your other magical reading, you may as well go ahead with what follows.

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THE INSTRUCTION.

As I have already explained, I am not here concerned with the front and back palming of cards, neither am I going to delve into the production of cards singly at the fingertips, because these have been given ample space in Thurston's book on Card Tricks. My chief aim is to thoroughly explain the production of fans of cards from the back palm. These are illustrated with composite photographs, which show both the front and the back of the hand. The reader should not only read the directions, but refer to the photographs when mention of them is made. Study each one carefully to get the best results in trying them out.



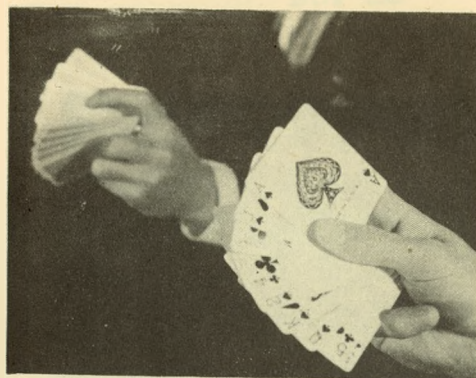
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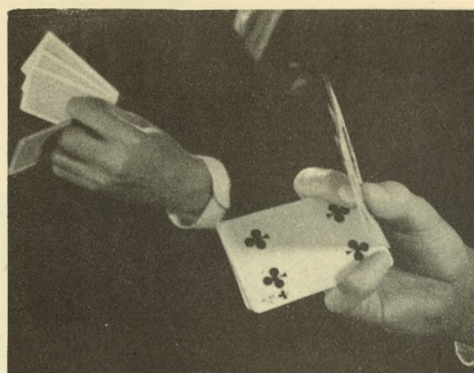
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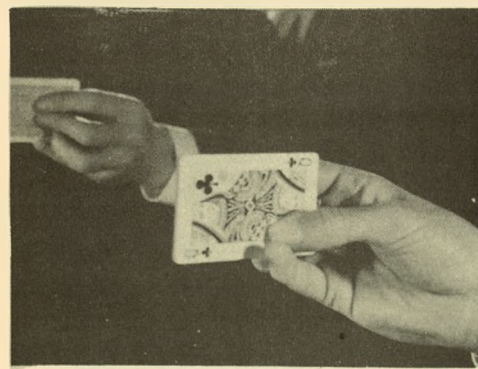
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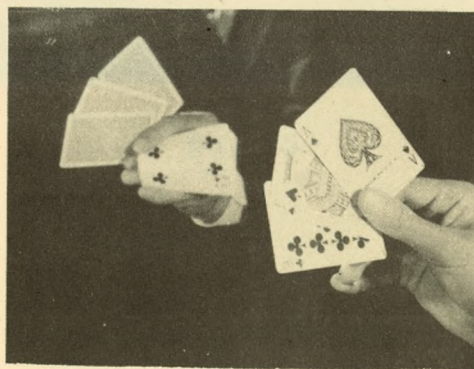
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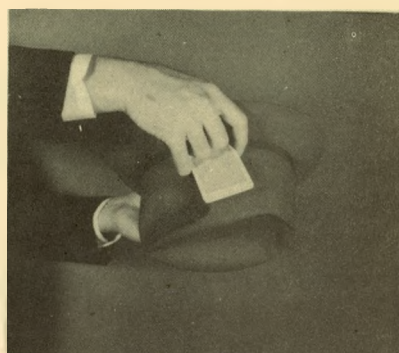
No. 4



No. 8



No. 9



No. 13



No. 10



No. 14



No. 11



No. 15



No.12

Begin by back palming, if you are a beginner, about ten cards as in Photograph No. 1, which shows both the front and the back of the hand. Now press the thumb of this hand against the upper corner of the cards as in Photo 2. The two middle fingers are taken out of the way to show this. This is done so that the cards, upon being pivoted to the front of the hand, will not engage the two middle fingers and thus cause the back card to jut out (as shown in Photo 3, which would spoil the fan to be produced. The cards, if held with the thumb as suggested, will be brought to the front as in Photo 4. Note the thumb is now brought down on the lowest corner of the cards. The back of the cards shows the position of the three fingers, also in Photo 4.

Now press upwards with the thumb to fan the cards as in Photo 5. The back of this fan and the position of the fingers is also shown in Photo 5. One other important point to remember is that the fourth or little finger is always kept under the fan and never moved out of this position. Study Photos 4 to 6. This little finger helps in the moves to follow.

When the cards are fanned, the forefinger goes up over to the top of the cards and pushes on the fan so as to separate approximately the three topmost cards from the rest of the fan as in Photo 6. From the front, Photo 6, everything looks natural. Now the rest of the fan is closed, the little finger and forefinger doing this very easily, and brought to the position for back palming. The three cards that were separated from the original fan are still held as in Photo 7 (mirror view).

Now the cards are pivoted further back. At the same time the thumb spreads the three visible cards into a fan at this

stage. Photo 8 shows the back of the cards and the same Photo 8 shows how it looks from the front. The three cards effectively conceal the cards in the back of the hand. This fanning of the three cards is done by moving the thumb backwards as the remaining cards are pivoted completely to the back of the hands. The fan of three cards is now dropped or thrown into a hat.

The action is again repeated by producing apparently another fan of cards and then apparently dropping this fan into the hat, but executing the move already explained. The move where the fan is dropped into the hat is done while the hand travels upward towards the hat. The three cards are really not held long enough for the audience to see that there are only three, but are dropped at once. This gives the illusion that the complete fan of cards is dropped each time.

Using this method of bluff, you can, with the ten cards, produce three fans, the last fan containing four cards spread out enough to give the illusion of a good sized fan if not help up to the audience's view too long.

The above explanation is the real basic principle of fan production, the only difference being in the amount of cards back palmed and the size of the fan that is eventually dropped into the hat.

For example let us back palm half the deck which is twenty six cards. On fanning out the twenty six cards, in the usual production manner, you will find that the fan of twenty six appears no larger than the fan of ten. The difference lies in the fact that there is a closer weave of cards in the fan of twenty six, but the fans are approximately the same in size.

When dealing with twenty six cards you do not look to make a break on the third or even the fourth card, but find the most convenient place to make the break and do so. This results in a fan which may be shown fully, before being dropped into the hat, because it has enough cards to make a well filled out fan as shown in Photo 9. Compare this fan with the fan of three and you will readily see why the fan of three must be dropped immediately on coming toward the hat, while the other may be held up to view for a while.

You can readily see that back palming twenty six cards will give you no greater number of fans. As a matter of fact, you can produce in this manner four fans. However, if you decide to bluff in dropping the fans, you can produce seven, but producing so many fans at one time is not such a good idea, because the audience will want to see the back of the hand. Personally, I do not believe in using the front and back palm in this kind of work. I will explain my reason for this later on.

You have been given an explanation of how to handle ten cards and how to handle twenty six. For my part, ten cards are not really enough, twenty six is too much. So let us compromise and use, say seventeen cards. The following will give you an idea of a sample routine.

With seventeen cards you can bluff through four fans and then still have some left over for producing the remainder singly. Then you apparently reach up and try to produce another fan, but nothing happens. You look at your hand casually, turning it over to show both sides. Suddenly you reach out with the left hand and produce a fan. Photo 10. This fan has of course been palmed from the beginning. The cards in Photo 10 are produced backs

toward the audience because the faces do not show the indexes of the cards when fanned with the left hand. The production of this fan gives you an opportunity to steal another 17 cards from a clip on your person. Photo 11.

Drop the complete fan produced in the left hand and produce more cards in a fan with the right hand, which has just stolen 17 cards, until the supply is exhausted. Then again use the same motion of trying to catch more but failing.

Pick up and show the inside of the hat, exposing all the cards in there and say, "That's not enough!" At the same time, make the "hat steal" which is explained later in this book, reaching up and producing more fans of cards. With this production completed, you can stop as there is no sense in overdoing anything. Notice the fact that the hands are shown empty and yet you did not have to risk using the front and back palm movement.

I said I would explain why I do not advocate showing the front and back of the hand when the cards are there, and I will do so by first stating that it is impossible to do so without giving away the fact that you are pivoting the cards (back palming). Don't start to tell me (as you might do if you were here in person) that perhaps I have never seen anyone do this movement who knew how. I assure you I have seen the best of them and the worst of them, as all magicians eventually play Chicago. And I do mean the best. But in trying to convince the audience that there was nothing in their hands, they actually let them see that there was. When I tell you that in two instances I was seated in the balcony and was still able to see the cards as they were pivoted, you will probably think that I was at a bad angle. As a matter of fact, I was directly in line with the performer.

Of these two performers whom I saw, one is considered a great exponent of this art. The other was - - he is now dead. I would rather not mention names in discussing the merits of magical methods when I have to do it as criticism. I will stick to naming those who deserve to be flattered, and forget to mention the others. However, I will say that the two performers above referred to were not the only ones whom I have seen do this sleight. I have seen many others perform it. There is one performer who seems to know that this is a difficult sleight, because he shows the back of the hand only once. Yet in this brief instant you can see the cards pivoted.

The back and front palm is a difficult sleight with no misdirection to help it along, because all eyes are on that hand every moment, so why try to do it? For the few magicians who may wonder whether I can do the pivot, after talking so much about it, I say "yes". But, I never attempt it at a public performance because I have found it is better to show the hand empty at various intervals and then depend upon clever steals, as already explained in the brief routine which is a part of the routine used by myself.

I want to mention Bill Baird at this point, as being wise enough to eliminate using the pivot, and for using a steal so old that it fooled me the first time I saw it, although I knew the move all along. Let me relate what happened.

Bill Baird was on the stage of the State Lake Theatre in Chicago doing sleight of hand with cards. The usual fans and productions took place, and then he produced three cards, one at a time. He then started to do the pivot move very slowly, but I

couldn't see the cards flash. I got excited, sat on the edge of my seat, and said to myself, "Here at last is a performer who can really do the pivot without exposing the cards!"

Then he spread his fingers wide apart -- he didn't have any cards! He smiled, the audience laughed, and relaxed. So did I, as I blushed to myself for being taken in. But at that moment, from the hand that was so plainly shown devoid of cards, there appeared a fan of cards followed by more fans. I was surprised and so was the audience. They expressed their surprise with a long drawn "oh!".

After that of course I had to stay for another performance. I then assured myself that he used an old steal with perfect misdirection. If you are interested in it, look in Howard Thurston's book of Card Tricks, wherein he explains the same steal using five cards, and which, to my mind, is real magic.

All of which goes to prove that you can get a more effective result by using clever steals. Eliminate the wagging and save the time it takes up in your act for some other effect.

Now some words of advice as to cards. You must get cards that fan easily. Otherwise you will not be able to make very good fans. The way to select a deck and what type and kind is fully treated in Greater Magic and also in Dodson's Exhibition Card Fans. In practicing use more cards than you would use in an actual performance, as this will make it much easier for you to handle a smaller amount later on. I usually practice with a half a deck but in actual performance I divide my cards up into twenty in each packet. When your hands get sticky, especially the two middle fingers, the cards will stick to them. Therefore dust a little talcum on the hands.

The type of hand you have decides whether the fan productions should be done slowly or with more flourish and speed. If you are fortunate enough to possess a large enough hand so that the cards can be back palmed without bending them, yet at the same time not exposing any of the cards between the fingers, you can work slowly. If you possess a hand like mine, not very large, and with spaces between the fingers, your cards will very easily be glimpsed between the fingers.

Persons with this latter type of hand should work in the following manner. The hand is brought up, always moving, the fan produced. The hand moves down to drop the fan into the hat. The fan is dropped, and the hand immediately moves upward, giving the audience just time enough to see that the fan has really been dropped and that the hand does not contain any cards. Another fan is produced. The produced fan is always held still so the audience can see it, but after it is dropped the hand must be kept moving. Using this method, the cards will not be seen even at a few feet distance.

I use, and suggest that you always use, cards for this work that have no white border, as the white will show quite plainly between the fingers. You can get cards that have a flesh tint along the border and this would be a perfect card for such work. Mr. Hank Nowoc of Chicago puts flesh paint on the top card of his packets. This serves the purpose and is an easy device for any one to try out.

Sometimes on buying a new deck of cards you will find that they will not fan right, no matter how you try. To correct this dust some Card Prep (or any similar card smoothing preparation) on the cards and you will find that they will work much better.

THE HAT STEAL.

This clever steal was devised by Mr. Mort Abrams. It is a nice innovation from the usual body steal and I recommend it to my readers to try out. I am sure you will use it constantly.

You need an ordinary felt hat with the usual band around it. Place a stack of cards under this band, backs outward, as in Photo 12. This side of the hat is away from the audience. Now after producing several fans, show the hands empty casually, as in the routine explained, and then with both hands reach over and tilt the hat toward the audience, so they can see the cards in it. At the same time the fingers steal the cards into the back palm position as in Photo 13. Now the hat is dropped, the cards are back palmed, the hand reaches into the air, and produces the fans. When using a high silk hat that has no band, use a black elastic around the hat.

In stealing the cards you steal them in the back palm position i.e. between forefinger and fourth fingers. Then all you do is merely straighten out all four fingers and cards are in the correct back palm position as in Photo 1.

Credit is here given to Hank Nowoc of Chicago who has devised a card to be used for those who do not have a big enough hand to conceal the edges of the cards back palmed.

He makes use of a card that is flesh colored at the parts that would show when the cards are back palmed. The Photo 14 shows where the paint is to be applied. This card can be added to the back of a packet that is palmed, and being the last card it will naturally remain until the fan productions are completed, when it will be finally dropped with the last fan or a single card production. This type of card is added to the back of each

of the distributed packets and has proven to be a great boon in disguising the edges of the cards.

THE CARD CLIP

While you may use a paper clip or some such contrivance to enable you to hang a few cards where they can be secured easily, a real card clip is so inexpensive and so positive that it doesn't pay to do without one. L.L.Ireland can supply you with an excellent spring steel clip, silent and positive in action, which can be pinned anywhere, for only 30¢ for one or two for 50¢.

A NET FOR CATCHING THE CARDS.

Although eliminating the "hat steal" idea, L.L.Ireland has a device which is perfect in every other way for use in fan productions. This is a special net, hung from a hoop, which has a mechanism that permits it to be instantly attached to a microphone, the rod of a Kellar Base Table, or any other upright rod you may have available. It will even work on some chair backs. As the fans are produced, the cards are tossed into this net, and the audience can see them in the netting, thus adding to the beauty of the trick, and the authenticity of the cards thus accumulated. Price of this device, ready to use, is \$2.50. Ask for the Net Style Servette.

TWO TYPES OF FANS.

There are two types of fans that are produced by the present day manipulators. I should really say two sizes of fans instead of types. If you will study Photo 5 and 15 you will readily see the difference. The type of fan shown in Photo 5 is the one most commonly used because it gives a

greater control, especially when working with gloves on. The fan shown in Photo 15 is much larger but gives you less control and requires a great deal of practice to do well. In both fans, however, the little finger is still kept under the fan produced, but because the fan is made larger, the four fingers are naturally dragged into the palm more. Study the front and back of the hand in Photo 5 and front and back of the hand in Photo 15. Now as far as lay audiences are concerned in each case all you do is produce fans of cards. Therefore, it is up to the individual as to whether he feels he should work towards the larger fan. I did, but others may chose to pursue the other and shorter course. In either case, the moves will be the same.

*GLOVED PRODUCTIONS.

The production of fans of cards with hands covered by gloves is a pretty bit of the dramatic adopted by several of the well known manipulators of the day. When pure white gloves are worn, and the performer dressed in impeccable black and white, the picture is indeed one of masculine beauty. The hands are greatly accented against the dark clothes, or the dark backdrop.

Besides adding to the appearance, there is no question but that it adds to the impression of skillfulness. Any audience will believe that the tricks are much more difficult when a glove lies between the fingers and the cards. In reality, the gloves play the same part in producing card fans, as the failures play in an acrobat's performing leaps into a basket chair. He tries it twice and fails both times, and then the third time he makes it. The gloves are in this class, in a quieter and more subtle way. But they are "build-up" nevertheless.

The same principles as outlined in the foregoing pages for productions with bare hands apply to productions with gloves on. However, a word as to the type of glove and any difficulty that may rise from their use.

First let us discuss the difficulties. The commonest one is that of the back card jutting out as shown in photo 3. This is remedied by using the move shown in Photo 2. You will have a little trouble at first in fanning but this will be overcome by practice. Also if you learn the technique very well with the bare hands, the gloved work will come readily.

Now as to the type of glove -- get set for a shock! Any type of soft glove may be used! Yes, I know, you thought that only the thin soft type of white dress glove used by the performers you have seen were the only ones to use. Of course they look the best, but others will do just as well.

The fact that you can use any type of soft glove may not seem important, but it is. Why? For the simple reason that gloved card manipulations need no longer be restricted to those who wear formal clothes. You can be dressed in any manner you wish and use a glove to match your clothing. Most of my gloved manipulations are done with large brown cloth gloves that sell for a quarter. I change off by using soft brown leather gloves.

Now for an amazing statement that you may not believe until you learn it for yourself. It is easier to produce card fans with gloves on than without them, for the reason that the bare hand has a tendency to perspire -- but not the glove!

The fan to be produced in gloved work, whether large as in Photo 15 or as in Photo 5, is again up to the individual. However, you will find that you can back palm more cards with

gloves on safely, because they cover the edges of the cards more than the bare hands.

If you use colored gloves paint the last card, as explained and shown in Photo 14, with the same color as the gloves. If you use white gloves, get white edged cards.

Finally, as an incentive to practice, let me say that this type of card magic is irresistible even to those people who hate anything that has to do with cards. And as for magicians, they will watch such manipulations for hours, even though they may know how it is done!

And the very last last small detail, which is not so small after all -- if you are going to do fan productions, your hands are going to be very much in evidence every moment. Keep them well groomed, scrubbed clean, nails clean and cut neatly short. Some performers use clear nail polish to dress up the nails, but we consider well scrubbed and trimmed nails as good as anything. Rubbing hand cream into the hands will keep them in good shape, so that when you work with the cards, they will not be stiff and dry. But use the cream at night, and have the hands in shape when ready to work. Don't cream them just before working, as this will make them slightly greasy. For working under spot lights, powdering the hands will make them show up well.

We wish you and your hands, gloved or bare, the best of luck.



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